

Positions in Public Humanities

Overview:

NEH-supported Positions in Public Humanities are intended to invigorate the interpretation of the humanities at museums and historical organizations. To that end, organizations applying for a Museums, Libraries, and Cultural Organizations implementation grant (but not for a Museums, Libraries, and Cultural Organizations planning grant) are invited to request funding for a position in public humanities.

This funding supports two-year, full-time, entry-level positions at museums, historical societies, and historic sites for recent graduates of public humanities MA or PhD programs and for recent graduates of humanities PhD programs whose expertise is critical to a project's success. In funding these positions, NEH seeks to strengthen the interpretive and public aspects of Museums, Libraries, and Cultural Organizations projects by incorporating fresh ideas and perspectives. It also aims to give new graduates experience in public humanities positions.

The Division of Public Programs envisions this program funding up to ten two-year positions at a salary of \$30,000/year. Note, though, that an applicant may request support for only one such position.

How to apply:

Institutions applying for a position in public humanities should indicate that in the "Nature of the request" section of their implementation grant project narrative. The proposal must also include a separate three-page single-spaced attachment (Attachment 13) titled "publicpositions.pdf." This attachment should

- explain how and where the position will be advertised;
- describe the proposed position in terms of the tasks to be done and the goals to be achieved;
- provide details about the ideal candidate and the area in which he or she would work (for example, in the education, digital, curatorial, or some other institutional department);
- detail the contributions that the new employee would make to the project;
- outline the vetting process for the candidates; and
- explain the value added to the larger project by the creation of this position.

These awards may not be used to support

- the salaries of current staff members;
- payments to project consultants;
- the hiring of individuals who hold teaching or administrative assignments during the two-year period; or
- the hiring of individuals currently enrolled in a degree-granting program.

Eligibility and selection:

NEH Positions in Public Humanities should be widely advertised, so as to draw on a national pool of candidates. Applications must be solicited and reviewed by the organization that administers the implementation grant. To be eligible to be hired, applicants must have graduated in the last five years from a public history,

museum studies, or similar MA or PhD program or from a humanities PhD program. Institutions are encouraged to seek a diverse pool of applicants.

Applicants for these positions should submit a cv, graduate school transcript, writing sample, cover letter, and three letters of reference. The selection should be made by a committee convened by the project director. Committees customarily consist of three members: the project director and two other humanities experts who are familiar with the project or bring special knowledge to the project. Committees may include other personnel or scholars who will contribute to the project and may be composed of more than three members. These committees should review all applications and extend an invitation to the top-ranked candidate.

The awards support only full-time employees. Individuals hired for an NEH-supported public humanities position would work on specific aspects of the larger project, related to public engagement with the project. They are also expected to undertake professional development training by participating in an NEH-organized meeting at a national or regional museum conference. The cost of travel to and from this meeting would be borne by the institution.

Award:

The maximum stipend is \$30,000 for a twelve-month period, to be applied to salary but not to fringe benefits, for a total of \$60,000 for two years. Institutions must provide benefits equal to those offered other staff members. Include in the budget line items for the salary and fringe benefits of the new hire for two years. (NB: This additional \$60,000 budget component will increase the typical maximum implementation award to \$460,000.) Applicants that wish to increase the salary above \$30,000 must use their own funds to do so. Applicants must also use their own funds to pay for the employee's benefits.

Responsibilities:

In addition to their work on the larger project, individuals in NEH-supported public humanities positions should also administer three different types of public programs during their tenure at the institution. They might, for example, organize film and panel discussions, family gallery talks, or an oral history day program.

Sample projects:

- As part of a new emphasis on interpreting slavery throughout its entire historic site, a Southern plantation might create a position for a recent anthropology PhD to conduct outreach and collect oral histories from descendants of slaves. This research and personal testimony would inform the writing of a final interpretive plan for the site.
- An art museum reinstalling its American wing might hire a recent graduate from a public humanities program who would work with curators and educators to devise a high school curriculum interpreting the American collection and would collaborate with the local school district to receive and incorporate teachers' feedback.
- As part of a statewide celebration of women's history, a state humanities council might hire a recent digital humanities PhD to devise a GPS-based app of significant women's history sites throughout the state.